

2002 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards

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The phoenix—a mythical bird that is consumed in flames then rises from its own ashes—symbolizes immortality, resurrection, and life after death. It is fitting that an award for superior maintenance, which can bestow new and sustained life to equipment and weapon systems, is named for the phoenix.

The Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards honor six military maintenance organizations for outstanding performance. The awardees—two from each category of small, medium, and large organizations—are chosen from active and reserve units that perform maintenance at the intermediate or unit level (below the depot level). One of them is singled out as the very best and receives the Phoenix Award.

The organizations recognized in 2002 range from small—83 personnel assigned to A Company, 201st Forward Support Battalion—to large—4,600 personnel assigned to the USS *Enterprise*. What they all have in common is their unsurpassed spirit of dedication and excellence. In brief, these are their stories.

2002 Phoenix Award Winner: USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65)—USN Ready on Arrival

Ready on Arrival was never a more descriptive motto for the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65) and her battle group than during the days after September 11, 2001. The *Enterprise* was beginning her voyage home from the Arabian Gulf when she immediately turned around and played a critical role during the initial strikes against al Qaeda and Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Aircraft from the *Enterprise* flew nearly 700 missions during *Operation Enduring Freedom*. On its deployment, the crew supported 14,000 launches and recoveries, with no flights missed because of equipment failure or unavailability.

Despite the oldest and most complex nuclear propulsion system ever engineered—the *Enterprise* is more than 40 years old—the Reactor Department passed an Operational Reactor Safeguards Examination with exemplary results. The Combat Systems missiles team maintained three Close-In Weapons System Phalanx guns, two NATO Sea Sparrow Missile System launchers, and two radar systems at 99 percent reliability. *Enterprise* personnel also assumed the most comprehensive material condition upgrade ever conducted aboard an aircraft carrier that was outside a rework period.

Furthermore, the unit accomplished this unprecedented task at the height of an extremely arduous interdeployment training cycle.

The tenacity, innovation, and actions of the *Enterprise* crew, coupled with a total quality maintenance philosophy, are today's benchmark for the Department of Defense. The proven readiness of this national asset and professionalism of the *Enterprise* crew upheld the highest traditions of the U.S. Navy and DoD. The crew truly deserves this year's Phoenix Award and the recognition that it is the "best of the best."



2002 Award Winners

A Company, 201st Forward Support Battalion, Vilseck, Germany—USA SMALL UNIT, BIG SUPPORT

A Company, 201st Forward Support Battalion is responsible for all logistics support to units of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team (BCT). A Company provided superior support for all classes of supply in both operational and training environments and maintained a 97 percent monthly operational readiness rate for a range of equipment: wheeled vehicles; weapons; nuclear, biological, and chemical equipment; and communications and electronics. For every rotation or

training exercise, A Company provided exceptional logistics support—deploying part of its operation to support units in the field while retaining capability at home to push parts to operational and training areas in Europe.

A Company dispensed thousands of gallons of fuel and issued millions of dollars worth of parts during deployment to Kosovo. It also established an ammunition holding area during the 3rd BCT's Combined

Maneuver Training Center live-fire exercise, which concluded with 100 percent accountability of ammunition (valued at more than \$1.8 million). While conducting numerous "refuel on the move" missions, the unit issued more than 4,000 gallons of fuel and processed more than \$41 million of ammunition. A Company is committed to excellence, cost-effectiveness, and customer satisfaction. It sets the pace for innovative maintenance management.

510th Fighter Squadron, Aviano, Italy—USAF BUZZARDS' RULE

Maintainers assigned to the 510th Fighter Squadron—the Buzzards—were essential in the success of *Operation Northern Watch*. The squadron provided 100 percent aircraft delivery for 454 combat sorties. Despite deployments during most of the year, the 510th Fighter Squadron maintained a remarkable 86.4 percent mission-capable rate. This surpassed the average for F-16 aircraft within the Air Combat Command, and it set the standard for aircraft delivery with 326 *Operation Joint Guardian* missions.

A Command Inspector General team identified several squadron strengths and awarded the Sortie Generation Flight the first "excellent" rating in 2 years. Squadron maintainers also tackled data integrity challenges by creating "one stroke" maintenance data-entry keypads to document phase maintenance actions. The result was an immediate 80 percent reduction in errors. The unit implemented production improvements in the quality and cycle time of phase inspections, which reduced flow time by 47 percent, with an

accompanying 25 percent improvement in disposition and supply processes. The 510th Fighter Squadron was also selected as the lead unit for the Environmental Stabilization System, which is expected to save millions of dollars in F-16 replacement parts and increase aircraft reliability.

Arriving on time with the right tools, the right training, and the right attitude to get the job done right the first time is the Buzzards' standard that sets them apart as one of DoD's most effective maintenance organizations.

9th Engineer Support Battalion, Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan—USMC SEND IN THE ENGINEERS!

The Marines of the 9th Engineer Support Battalion (ESB) demonstrated unsurpassed maintenance professionalism that enabled them to provide critical engineering support throughout III Marine Expeditionary Force and the Pacific theater.

Battalion operational results were amazing. More than 17 major exercises were supported in 6 Asian countries, with an additional 20 community and local infrastructure improve-

ments. Humanitarian projects included bridge construction in East Timor, land mine removal operations in Thailand, and MIA service member recovery in Vietnam.

A test bed for cost-saving initiatives—a centralized battery recharging room, singular hazardous material pharmacy, and antifreeze recycling—the 9th ESB is among the most resourceful units in DoD. The battalion consistently received “excellent” results in inspections from the

Third Force Service Support Group and outside agencies, substantiating the 9th ESB as environmentally conscientious.

By maintaining a materiel readiness rating of 92.3 percent for more than 73 types and 600 items of equipment, the Marines of the 9th ESB have established the readiness benchmark. The battalion’s performance, regardless of the situation or location, is a result of its outstanding personnel, real-world training, and “can do” attitude.

18th Maintenance Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan—USAF LEADING THE WAY

The largest maintenance squadron in the Air Force is also one of the very best in DoD. Pacesetter innovation and mission-first drive placed the 18th Maintenance Squadron at the pinnacle of logistics squadrons.

The 18th Maintenance Squadron’s Eagle Eye software and database platform, which tracks the maintenance history of F-15 avionics system components, helped achieve annual savings of more than \$1 million and 21,000 work hours. Such innovation led

the Secretary of Defense’s Quality Management Office to evaluate the program for DoD-wide application, earning the unit the Air Force Productivity Excellence Award.

The outstanding practices of the 18th Maintenance Squadron were validated when the Propulsion Flight became the only Air Force field-level unit authorized to perform depot-level conversion maintenance of F-15 engines—modifying 96 modules. The overall effort will save

\$90 million during the next 5 years. The unit’s reputation for leading the way was also evident in their quality deficiency reporting program, which reclaimed \$12.9 million.

The 18th Maintenance Squadron meets every challenge with innovation, dedication, and professionalism. The squadron has redefined maintenance standards for the 18th Wing, the Pacific Air Forces, the United States Air Force, and the Department of Defense.

354th Fighter Wing, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska—USAF THE ICEMAN TEAM

After an incredibly fast-paced year filled with 4 deployments, 3 *Cope Thunder* training exercises, and 12 local exercises, the maintainers of the 354th Fighter Wing hit a home run with an “excellent” rating during a combat employment readiness inspection.

Using aggressive and innovative practices, the maintenance professionals of the 354th Fighter Wing allowed the wing to complete 8,700 sorties and 13,403 flying hours with no Class A mishaps, while operating in one

of the most extreme environments in the world. In *Operation Northern Watch*, the wing’s 18th Fighter Squadron performed combat search-and-rescue missions, a first for an Air Force F-16 unit. In addition, the wing’s 355th Fighter Squadron deployed to Nellis AFB, Nevada, for exercise *Air Warrior*, in which it flew 182 sorties while achieving an outstanding 96.3 percent mission-capable rate.

Their comprehensive “cradle-to-grave” weapons malfunction tracking program guaranteed

reliability of weapons, with unprecedented release rates of 99.7 percent for the A-10 and 99.6 percent for the F-16. The 354th Fighter Wing’s famed arctic maintainers pull together, continually demonstrating the highest degree of professionalism, dedication, and quality. Without fail, wing members portray themselves as one unit—the Icedman Team—and the wing has earned the right to be considered one of the very best in DoD.

2002 Winners

SMALL CATEGORY

A Company, 201st Forward Support Battalion
Vilseck, Germany
U.S. Army

510th Fighter Squadron
Aviano, Italy
U.S. Air Force

MEDIUM CATEGORY

9th Engineer Support Battalion, Camp Hansen
Okinawa, Japan
U.S. Marine Corps

18th Maintenance Squadron, Kadena Air Base
Okinawa, Japan
U.S. Air Force

LARGE CATEGORY

354th Fighter Wing
Eielson AFB, Alaska
U.S. Air Force

PHOENIX AWARD

USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65)
Norfolk, Virginia
U.S. Navy



The Honorable Diane K. Morales, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, with members of the 2002 Phoenix Award-winning team from the USS *Enterprise*.



2002 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards presented by
The Honorable Diane K. Morales,
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Logistics and Materiel Readiness), and
Lt. Gen. Paul V. Hester, USAF, Commander of U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command